

Let It Come From You

a recital of songs by Heggie, Bolcom, and Sondheim

Catherine Brady, mezzo soprano

Joanne Yang, piano
Daniel Bussey, baritone

RECITAL NOTES

Iconic Legacies
First Ladies at the Smithsonian

Lyrics by Gene Scheer (b. 1958)

Music by Jake Heggie (b. 1961)

"... we wanted to connect the songs to iconic objects in the Smithsonian. During his research at the museum, Gene saw the mink coat Marian Anderson had worn when she sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial – an occasion made possible by Eleanor Roosevelt. It was a landmark civil rights event. That's when the idea emerged to find iconic objects in the Smithsonian associated with First Ladies. In addition to the Eleanor Roosevelt-Marian Anderson connection, Gene wrote about Mary Todd Lincoln and the hat Lincoln wore the day he died. Specifically, the mourning band on the hat, placed there after the death of their child William. That is followed by a song about Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and the White House Christmas card she and her husband signed just hours before his assassination. We close the set with a tribute to Barbara Bush's literacy campaign and the beloved Muppets. The premiere took place Sept 12, 2015, at the Terrace Theater of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts."

Jake Heggie, liner notes from "Jake Heggie: Unexpected Shadows"

I. Eleanor Roosevelt: Marian Anderson's Mink Coat

Listen! Listen!
Marian Anderson is singing of thee.
Beyond compromise,
Beyond recrimination,
Beyond the anger of a divided nation
Marian Anderson is singing.
Wearing this elegant mink,
she stood on the steps beneath Lincoln's stony stare,
intoned our nation's hymn
and let freedom ring and ring and ring.
Oh, what a sound!
Of thee I sing.

There are some paths no map will ever trace.
But, from Lincoln's steps
to Charleston's "Amazing Grace"
With ev'ry step on the way
I think about what she showed us that day:
No one can make you feel inferior
without your consent. No one.

Who are we?
Beyond compromise,
Beyond recrimination,
Beyond the anger of a divided nation
Marian Anderson is singing of thee.

II. Mary Todd Lincoln: Abraham Lincoln's Hat

Your measured gestures mock me.
Words of kindness feel like crimes.
In a world where this can happen
Only madness rhymes.

I am drowning, but will not die.
Rip the stars from out the sky.
The ship is lost and you pretend
we'll find our way,
the pain will end.

Your measured gestures mock me.
Words of kindness feel like crimes.
In a world where this can happen
Only madness rhymes.

He wore this hat the day he died.
A grieving nation cried.
But long before— for me—
He wore it as an elegy.
Around his hat he tied a mourning band.
Spoke through tears, but somehow—
Did not understand.
"Oh, husband! Oh, my Abraham!" I said.
"Our son, our world, our William is dead."

I am drowning, but will not die.
Rip the stars from out the sky.
The ship is lost and you pretend
we'll find our way,
the pain will end.

Your measured gestures mock me.
Words of kindness feel like crimes.
In a world where this can happen
Only madness rhymes

Your measured gestures mock me.
Words of kindness feel like crimes.
In a world where this can happen
Only madness rhymes,
only madness, madness rhymes.

III. Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: White House Christmas Card, 1963

Jack walked into the room and said:
“Diamond! Minks and diamond!
That’s what they’ll be wearing in Dallas.”

I looked up from signing a Christmas card:
“What would you like me to do?”
He said: “Let me help you choose.”

I was delighted! We’d never done this before.
The beige and white dress? No?
The blue and yellow suit? Maybe?
The pink Chanel? “Yes!”
Yes!” he said, “wear that.
with the hat.”

Before I left the room, I said:
“Jack, I just started the Christmas cards.
There...add your name.”

Fifty hours later I walked back into the bedroom
Wearing the pink Chanel suit he’d chosen
Covered in his blood.

And there it was, signed by both of us:
A Christmas card propped up on the table
Like a question mark.

Oh Jack, what would you like me to do?

IV. Barbara Bush: The Muppets

This is Pete. He looks like a piano, but wait...
It's magic!
A squiggle, a curve, a line
blossoms into a letter,
a letter into a word.

Then words that rhyme
and phrases like “One upon a time.”

It's magic! The phrase becomes the mountain
you're climbing that – oh, my goodness! –
may not be a mountain at all!
But an incredibly fleet, not petite,
very sweet dinosaur named Pete,
who wakes and takes you on his shoulders
where the water splashes and flows
and tickles the end of your nose
with a drip, drip, drop and a tiny tap.
And all of this happens from your mother's lap.

Imagine! You can travel anywhere.
And it all begins with “One upon a time.”
Four little words.
Imagine you could not read them to your child.

Something must be done, I thought.
Which is how I made my way to Sesame Street.
Surrounded by dozens of muppets
you discover your cup it's overflowing with possibility.

Fabric, buttons and thread.
Dreams woven from Jim Henson's head.
An alphabet of riffs and dreams.
And suddenly, suddenly you're on
the incredibly fleet, not petite,
very sweet dinosaur named Pete
whose feet treat you to a ride
to the gate through a berry patch.
There's a sign on the latch.
And for the first time—
all by yourself—
You read the words:
“Once upon a time.”

Thanks, Pete!

Cabaret Songs
Selections from Volumes 1 and 2

Lyrics by Arnold Weinstein (1927-2005)

Music by William Bolcom (b. 1938)

"...there have been many frequently-asked questions about the words and backgrounds of the songs, and I will answer them as best I can in Arnold's absence....**Fur** is inspired by a relative of Arnold's, not his uncle, as I understand. I do believe however that the furrier's name was Murray...I owe the opening notes of **Waitin** and **Amor**, among many other musical ideas, to Arnold...After several attempts to set [**Amor**] to music which satisfied neither of us, I asked Arnold to sing to me what he had in mind. His pause after "the" in "It wasn't the..." would become the key to the song for me: salsa...A close friend of Joan Morris's and mine, Kay Swift...put a practiced eye on George Gershwin's orchestration of *Porgy and Bess* and also had a long romantic relationship with him. One day after a few vodka-and-tonics she told of their steamy love life: "It was fabulous, but he never stayed over. It never got to **Toothbrush Time**." ...**George** is a composite portrait of a number of [cross-dressing] (if only in their singing selves) falsetto singers we knew who specialized in the female operatic repertoire...The kind of murder mentioned in **George** was all too common around Christopher Street when I lived there in the 1960s."

William Bolcom, "Notes to the Complete Edition: Volumes 1 and 2"

Fur (Murray the Furrier)

My Uncle Murray the furrier
was a big worrier
but he's no hurrier now not today.
He's good and retired now,
didn't get fired, now
fulfills his desires on half of his pay.

He eats in the best of dives
although he dines alone.
He buried two wonderful wives
and he still has the princess phone.
It's the best of all possible lives
owning all that he owns on his own.

You see, he never took off a lot,
and used to cough a lot,
fur in his craw from hot days in the store.
Worked his way up to the top.
Was the steward of the shop.
Has a son who is a cop
and he is free!

My Uncle Murray the retiree
loves this democracy
and says it very emphatic'ly.
He lives where he wishes,
when he wants does the dishes,
eats greasy knishes, yes-sir-ree!
He is free!

No guilt, no ghost,
no gift for no host,

he goes, coast to coast,
coughing coughing.

My Uncle Murray the furrier
no, no worrier he.

Waitin

Waitin waitin I've been waitin
waitin waitin all my life.

That light keeps on hiding from me
but it someday just might bless my sight.

Waitin waitin waitin

Amor

It wasn't the policeman's fault
in all the traffic roar
instead of shouting halt
when he saw me, he shouted Amor

Even the ice-cream man
(free ice-creams by the score)
instead of shouting Butter Pecan
one look at me he shouted Amor

All over town it went that way
Ev'rybody took off the day
Even philosophers understood
how good was the good 'cuz I looked so good!

The poor stopped taking less
the rich stopped needing more.
Instead of shouting no and yes
both looking at me shouted Amor

My stay in town was cut short
I was dragged to court
the judge said I disturbed the peace
and the jury gave him what for!

The judge raised his hand
and instead of Desist and Cease
Judgie came to the stand
took my hand
and whispered Amor

Night was turning into day
I walked alone away.
Never see that town again.
But as I passed the church house door
instead of singing Amen
the choir was singing Amor

Toothbrush Time

It's toothbrush time,
ten a.m. again and toothbrush time.
Last night at half past nine it seemed O.K.
But in the light of day
not so fine at toothbrush time

Now he's crashing 'round my bathroom
now he's reading my degree
perusing all my pills
reviewing all my ills
and he comes out smelling like me.

Now he advances on my kitchen,
now he raids every shelf
'till from the pots and pans and puddles and debris
emerges three eggs all for himself.

Oh, how I'd be ahead
if I'd stood out of bed;
I wouldn't sit here grieving,
waiting for the wonderful moment of his leaving
at toothbrush time, toothbrush time,
ten a.m. again and toothbrush time.

I know it's sad to be alone
it's so bad to be alone,

still I should've known
that I'd be glad to be alone.
I should've known, I should've known!
Never should've picked up the phone
and called him.

Hey...uh, listen, uhm, uh, I've got to uh,
...oh, you gotta go, too?
So glad you understand.
And by the way, did you say nine tonight again?
See you then...Toothbrush time!

George

My friend George used to say,
"Oh call me Georgia, hon,
Get yourself a drink,"
and sang the best soprano
in our part of town.

In beads, brocade and pins,
he sang if you happened in
through the door he never locked
and said, "Get yourself a drink,"
and sang out loud 'till tears fell in the cognac
and the cho'late milk and gin
and on the beads, brocade and pins.

When strangers happened through his open door,
George said, "Stay, but you gotta keep quiet
while I sing and then a minute after.
And call me Georgia."

One fine day a stranger
in a suit of navy blue
took George's life with a knife
George had placed beside an apple pie he'd baked
and stabbed him in the middle
of *Un bel di vedremo*
as he sang for this particular stranger
who was in the United States Navy.

The funeral was the cocktail hour.
We knew George would like it like that.
Tears fell on the beads, brocade and pins
in the coffin, which was white,
because George was a virgin

Oh call him Georgia, hon, get yourself a drink.

"You can call me Georgia, hon, get yourself a drink!"

Sunday in the Park with George
Selections featuring Dot and George

Book by James Lapine (b. 1949)

Lyrics and Music by Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021)



This musical premiered in 1984 and is inspired by George Seurat's painting, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (1884-1886). The story follows a fictionalized version of Seurat and the subjects of this painting, including his lover, Dot, who is featured in the right foreground. There is much to take in from this dynamic piece of theater, and I encourage those interested to watch the entire show when they have the opportunity. For today's program, we will perform excerpts centered around the relationship between Dot and George.

Sunday in the Park with George

GEORGE:

More boats. More trees.

DOT:

George. Why do you always get to sit in the shade while I have to stand in the sun? George? Hello, George? There is someone in this dress!

A trickle of sweat.

The back of the head.

He always does this.

Now the foot is dead.

Sunday in the park with George.

One more Su-

The collar is damp,

Beginning to pinch.

The bustle's slipping –

I won't budge one inch.

Who was at the zoo, George?

Who was at the zoo?

The monkeys and who, George?

The monkeys and who?

GEORGE:

Don't move, please.

DOT:

Artists are bizarre. Fixed. Cold.
That's you, George, you're bizarre. Fixed. Cold.
I like that in a man. Fixed. Cold.
God, it's hot out here.

Well, there are worse things
Than staring at the water on a Sunday.
There are worse things
Than staring at the water
As you're posing for a picture
Being painted by your lover
In the middle of the summer
On an island in the river on a Sunday.

The petticoat's wet,
Which adds to the weight.
The sun is blinding.
Alright, concentrate...

GEORGE:
Eyes open, please.

DOT:
Sunday in the park with George.

GEORGE:
Look out at the water. Not at me.

DOT:
Sunday in the park with George.
Concentrate...Concentrate...

Well, if you want bread
And respect, And attention,
Not to say connection,
Modelling's no profession.

If you want, instead,
When you're dead,
Some more public
And more permanent expression of affection,
You want a
Painter, Poet, Sculptor, preferably:
Marble, Granite, Bronze. Durable.
Something nice with swans
That's durable forever.

All it has to be is good.
And, George, you're good.
You're really good.
George's stroke is tender.
George's touch is pure.

Your eyes, George.
I love your eyes, George.
I love your beard, George.
I love your size, George.
But most, George, of all,
But most of all,
I love your painting...
I think I'm fainting...

The tip of a stay.
Right under the tit.
No, don't give in, just---
Lift the arm a bit...

GEORGE:
Don't lift the arm, please.

DOT:
Sunday in the park with George.

GEORGE:
The bustle high, please.

DOT:
Not even a nod.
As if I were trees.
The ground could open,
He would still say, "Please".
Never know with you, George,
Who could know with you?
The others I knew, George.
Before we get through,
I'll get to you, too.
God, I am so hot!

Well, there are worse things
Than staring that the water on a Sunday.
There are worse things
Than staring that the water
As you're posing for a picture
After sleeping on the ferry
After getting up at seven
To come over to an island
In the middle of a river
Half an hour from the city
On a Sunday,
On a Sunday in the park with -

GEORGE:
Don't move the mouth.

DOT:
George.

Everybody Loves Louis

DOT:

Hello, George...
Where did you go, George?
I know you're near, George.
I caught your eyes, George.
I want your ear, George.
I've a surprise, George.

Ev'rybody loves Louis,
Louis' simple and kind.
Ev'rybody loves Louis,
Louis' lovable.
Seems we never know, do we,
Who we're going to find.
And Louis the baker is not what I had in mind.

But...Louis' really an artist:
Louis' cakes are an art.
Louis isn't the smartest –
Louis' popular.
Ev'rybody loves Louis:
Louis bakes from the heart...

The bread, George.
I mean, the bread, George.
And then in bed, George...
I mean he kneads me –
I mean like dough, George...
Hello, George...

Louis' always so pleasant,
Louis' always so fair.
Louis makes your feel present,
Louis' generous.
That's the thing about Louis:
Louis always is "there".
Louis' thoughts are not hard to follow,
Louis' art is not hard to swallow.
Not that Louis' perfection –
That's what makes him ideal.
Hardly anything worth objection:
Louis drinks a bit,
Louis blinks a bit.
Louis makes a connection,
That's the thing that you feel...

We lose things.
And then we choose things.
And there are Louis's
And there are Georges –

Well, Louis's
And George.

But George has George,
And I need –
Someone –
Louis –

Ev'rybody loves Louis,
Him as well as his cakes.
Ev'rybody loves Louis,
Me included, George.
Not afraid to be gooey,
Louis sells what he makes.

Ev'rybody gets along with him.
That's the trouble, nothing's wrong with him.
Louis has to bake his way,
George can only bake his...
Louis it is!

We Do Not Belong Together

DOT:

Yes, George, run to your work. Hide behind your painting. I have come to tell you that I am leaving because I thought you might care to know – foolish of me because you care about nothing.

GEORGE:

I care about many things –

DOT:

Things. Not people.

GEORGE:

People, too. I cannot divide my feelings as neatly as you and, I am not hiding behind my canvas – I am living in it.

DOT:

What you care for is yourself.

GEORGE:

I care about this painting. You will be in this painting.

DOT:

I am something you can use.

GEORGE:

I had thought you understood.

DOT:

It's because I understand that I left, that I am leaving.

GEORGE:

Then there's nothing I can say, is there?

DOT:

Yes, George, there is: you could tell me not to go.

Say it to me.

Tell me not to go.

Tell me that you're hurt, Tell me you're relieved,
Tell me that you're bored – Anything, but don't
assume I know.

Tell me what you feel.

GEORGE:

What I feel? You know exactly how I feel.
Why do you insist you must hear the words,
When you know I cannot give you words?
Not the ones you need.

There's nothing to say.
I cannot be what you want.

DOT:

What do you want, George?

GEORGE:

I needed you and you left.

DOT:

There was no room for me.

GEORGE:

You will not accept who I am.
I am what I do!
Which you knew,
Which you always knew,
Which I thought you were a part of!

DOT:

No, you are complete, George,

You are your own.

We do not belong together.

You are complete, George,

You all alone.

I am unfinished,

I am diminished

With or without you.

We do not belong together,

And we should have belonged together.

What made it so right together

Is what made it all wrong.

No one is you, George,

There we agree,

But others will do, George.

No one is you, and

No one can be,

But no one is me, George,

No one is me.

We do not belong together.

And we'll never belong!

You have a mission,

A mission to see.

Now I have one, too, George.

And we should have belonged together.

I have to move on.

Move On

GEORGE: DOT:

I've nothing to say.

You have many things...

Well, nothing that's not been said.

Said by you, though, George.

I do not know where to go.

And nor did I.

GEORGE:

I want to make things that count,
Things that will be new...

DOT:

I did what I had to do:

GEORGE:

What am I to do?

DOT:

Move on.

Stop worrying where you're going –
Move on.

If you can know where you're going,
You've gone.

Just keep moving on.

I chose, and my world was shaken –
So what?

The choice may have been mistaken,
The choosing was not.
You have to move on.

Look at what you want,
Not at where you are,
Not at what you'll be.

Look at all the things you've done for me:

Opened up my eyes,
Taught me how to see,
Notice ev'ry tree...

GEORGE: DOT:

Notice ev'ry tree...

Understand the light –

...Understand the light...

Concentrate on now –

GEORGE:

I want to move on.

I want to explore the light.

I want to know how to get through,
Through to something new,
Something of my own –

BOTH:

Move on.

Move on.

DOT:

Stop worrying if your vision is new.

Let others make that decision –

They usually do.

You keep moving on.

DOT:

GEORGE:

Look at what you've done,

...Something in the light,

Then at what you want,

Something in the sky,

Not at where you are,

In the grass

What you'll be.

Up behind the trees...

Look at all the things you gave to me.

Things I hadn't looked at till now:

Let me give to you

Flower in your hat

Something in return

And your smile

I would be so pleased...

And the color of your hair

GEORGE:

And the way you catch the light,

And the care

And the feeling

And the life

Moving on!

DOT:

We've always belonged together!

BOTH:

We will always belong together!

DOT:

Just keep moving on.

Anything you do,

Let it come from you.

Then it will be new.

Give us more to see...

Over the Rainbow

Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg (1896-1981)
Music by Harold Arlen (1905-1986)

Somewhere over the rainbow,
way up high,
there's a land that I heard of
once in a lullaby.

Somewhere over the rainbow
skies are blue,
and the dreams that you dare to dream
really do come true.

Someday I'll wish upon a star
and wake up where the clouds are far behind me.

Where troubles melt like lemon drops
away, above the chimney tops
that's where you'll find me.

Somewhere over the rainbow,
bluebirds fly,
birds fly over the rainbow
why then, oh why can't I?

If happy little bluebirds fly
beyond the rainbow
why, oh why, can't I?